

**STATE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD APPROVES \$4.8
MILLION IN MSCP LAND ACQUISITIONS**

The recent approval of \$4.8 million by the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) on August 10, 2000 has proven to be a success for residents in the Ramona and Lakeside area and for San Diego County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). \$3.8 million of this fund will be used to acquire and preserve the 1,175 -acre Boys and Girls Club property south of Iron Mountain. The WCB is the funding arm of the California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG). It works with various agencies including the County and private landowners to acquire sensitive habitat to conserve California's wildlife.

The East County Boys and Girls Club has owned the property and had been seeking a buyer for the past four years. An offer by the state Off-Highway

Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission was once considered in order to make the Boys and Girls Club property an off-road vehicle park. However, habitat damage, soil erosion, and noise were primary concerns for many residents and environmental groups. This acquisition will preserve the land as open space and it will become part of the MSCP. This preserve will protect the wildlife corridor between the Iron Mountain Preserve and the open space adjacent to San Vicente Reservoir. Preservation of this land will be important to the MSCP East County Plan and will protect land that is valued by the residents in the surrounding areas.

An additional \$1 million was granted to the County of San Diego to acquire 287 acres from the Daley

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AMERICAN PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)



Photo: Craig Koppe, USFWS

Perhaps one of the more famous endangered species to begin its recovery, the American peregrine falcon has made a dramatic comeback since its endangered listing in 1970. It is also a covered animal species under the MSCP Subarea Plan. This medium-sized bird of prey has a wingspan of about 3 1/2 feet, and feeds on other birds such as pigeons, doves, songbirds, and shorebirds. The peregrine falcon has light colored undersides, large eyes, sharp curved beaks, and blue-gray wings. It is estimated that when these birds hunt, they can dive at a speed of over 200 miles per hour and normally fly at 40 to 55 miles per hour.

Peregrine falcons are found throughout North America. The American, Arctic, and Peale's are the three subspecies of the peregrine falcon. They tend to nest in shallow depressions on cliff ledges

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(American Peregrine Falcon Continued from page 1)

or on tall building ledges in urban areas. From the 1940s to 1960s, the use of the pesticide dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) greatly affected the population of the American peregrine falcon. The population of these birds had declined by 80 to 90 percent by the time they were listed as endangered by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1970. Studies by scientists of the USFWS showed that DDT pesticide affected eggshell formation. The DDT consumed by the peregrine falcons from their contaminated prey resulted in thin-shelled eggs that often broke during incubation or did not hatch. DDT was restricted in the U.S. by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1972 for most uses.

In an effort to bring the population of the peregrine falcons back, the USFWS and other state wildlife agencies worked together to recover their populations in the 1970s. Due to captive breeding recovery efforts and the restrictions on DDT, the peregrine falcon population is now at about 1,650 breeding pairs in the U.S. and Canada, which is more than twice the original goal of 631. A population of peregrine falcons formerly nested along the coast and coastal lowlands of San Diego County. Former nesting locations include the lower Santa Margarita River, Pala, Escondido, San

Pasqual, La Jolla, and Pt. Loma.

As recently as August 1999, the peregrine falcon was removed from the endangered species list. Although this falcon is no longer endangered, it is still necessary and beneficial to the environment to have them covered under the MSCP. Their populations are relatively low on a state-by-state basis. California only has 167 known pairs based on a 1998 study done by the USFWS. In San Diego County, there are currently occurrences seen downtown near a few of the taller buildings, and at times in the superstructure of the Coronado Bridge.

(State WCB Approves \$4.8 Million in MSCP Land Acquisitions Continued from page 1)

family. This land is located south of Jamul and will contribute to the creation of the Lawrence and Barbara Daley Wildlife Preserve. \$81,500 was also approved to purchase 8.7 acres in Lakeside, in an area that has been considered by the CDFG to provide a natural habitat linkage critical to the existence of California Gnatcatcher population. Preserving these 1,500-acres is significant to the MSCP not only because it will protect sensitive habitat and wildlife but also to provide connective linkages for the overall MSCP preserve.

CRITICAL HABITAT DESIGNATIONS

The U.S Fish & Wildlife Service as a result of a Court order arising out of a lawsuit is in the process of designating large areas in southern California as "Critical Habitat" for a number of federally listed species. These "Critical Habitat" designations are for such species as: Riverside Fairy Shrimp, Red legged Frog, Arroyo Toad, San Diego Fairy Shrimp, California gnatcatcher, Western Snowy Plover, Peninsular Bighorn sheep, and the Tidewater Goby. Under the Federal Endangered Species Act, "Critical Habitat" identifies specific areas that are essential to the conservation of a listed species and may require special management considerations or protection. The Critical Habitat rules are applicable when there is a Federal involvement in the approval of a

project, such as a 404 Wetlands permit issued by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers.

How does the "Critical Habitat Designation" affect the MSCP? For "Critical Habitat" associated with MSCP Covered Species, there will be no additional requirements as long as a project proposal is consistent with the provisions of the MSCP. In areas outside of the MSCP the California gnatcatcher habitat is protected under the County's Habitat Loss Permit requirements and would not be affected. However, for other "Critical Habitats" outside the MSCP the additional regulations would apply until such time as MSCP North and East County Subarea Plans coverage are approved.

MSCP PERMIT GUIDE

FIRE SAFE COMMUNITIES AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

It is the time of year when fire hazard conditions in San Diego are at their most dangerous. Local County Fire Marshalls are assertively requiring the unsafe buildup of hazardous vegetation to be cleared around houses and other portions of property in the unincorporated area. Many people are concerned that complying with Fire Marshal notices for clearing may cause them to be in violation with State or Federal Endangered Species Acts if they clear vegetation that contains a listed species. Fortunately, this is not the case. In 1997, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the County Fire Chiefs' Association and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish & Game. This MOU permits the incidental take of endangered species by property owners clearing hazardous vegetation in response to a Fire Marshall's Order. This permit to take endangered species assumes that the County Fire Marshall has issued the order in conformance with the provisions of the MOU. As long as the clearing of the vegetation by the land owner is within the scope of the Fire



Marshall's Order consistent with the MOU, there will be no violation of the State or the Federal Endangered Species Acts (OR the MSCP). However, if the land owner goes beyond the clearing ordered by the Fire Marshall, then Federal, State, and other associated County permits may be required.

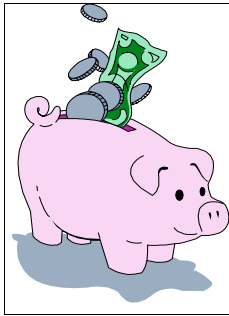
If you wish to clear more vegetation than the Fire Marshall has ordered please contact the Department of Planning and Land Use Zoning Information Counter regarding the required permits. The phone numbers are (858) 565-5981 and 1-888-267-8770.

WELCOME MAEVE HANLEY



The MSCP wishes to welcome our new staff member, Maeve Hanley, who recently joined the division. Maeve is from Dublin, Ireland and has permanently lived in San Diego for the last year and a half. She has an Honors B.S. in Environmental Biology (joint majors in Zoology and Botany) from University College, Dublin. Maeve has also been awarded a M.S. in Applied Environmental Sciences from Queens University, Belfast. She will have an essential role in the MSCP as an Environmental Management Specialist. Her research experience has involved the radio tracking of both badgers and bats to examine their spatial ecology, and has studied fallow deer mating behavior as well. Maeve has also been educating herself on the biological resources in San Diego County during the recent 18 months and the previous five summers that she has resided here.

STATE TAX INCENTIVES FOR DONATION OF LANDS TO MSCP



Private voluntary donations of land either in fee title or conservation easements can be a very important element of the creation of the 172,000-acre MSCP Preserve. The County of San Diego greatly encourages this form of private philanthropy and has established a Board of Supervisors Policy I-123 **Conservation Agreements** in support of such actions.

The State of California also encourages private donations. The State has recently passed legislation that establishes an economic incentive program that could provide significant tax benefits to land owners wishing to make such donations. By contributing property to the State as a conservation easement, landowners will be protecting wildlife habitat, open space, and agricultural lands while concurrently receiving tax benefits and still retain private ownership of their property. The State Legislature provided up to \$100,000,000 in tax credits towards donations of qualified land. A donor who contributes his/her qualified property will receive a tax credit equal to 55% of its fair market value. It is possible that this program may also provide certain Federal tax benefits as well; however, you should consult your tax advisor on your specific tax implications and benefits.

The County will assist landowners in obtaining the tax benefit if the donated easement is of benefit to the MSCP or meets other County conservation needs. Landowners can first submit a request to Robert Asher in the Department of Planning and Land Use of the County of San Diego. The County will then evaluate the proposal and forward it to the Wildlife Conservation Board. The

Wildlife Conservation Board of the State of California will administer this Program and make the final decisions on awarding the tax credits.

The Board of Supervisors Policy I-123 **Conservation Agreements** may be used in conjunction with this tax incentive program. This Board Policy would allow the establishment of Conservation Agreements that may also include certain Endangered Species Act Permit benefits that would be included in the package.

To see how this bill can benefit you as a land owner, please call your tax advisor for further details. If you are interested in dedicating your land to open space, please contact the Chief of MSCP, Robert Asher at (858) 694-3722

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service (NPS) is coming to San Diego. County Parks will receive assistance from NPS staff through the *Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program* to set up a program that will focus on successful working relationships among the array of private, non-profit and government landowners who manage the acres within the MSCP Preserve system and neighboring property owners. NPS staff will work with the land managers and neighbors to create a contact system and informational materials to help stakeholders communicate clearly and directly about neighborhood issues.

The goal of the *Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program* is to assist local communities achieve local conservation goals.

Editor: Susan Yogi
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OTAY MANZANITA (*Arctostaphylos otayensis*)



Photo: Gladys Lucille Smith

The Otay Manzanita is a shrub native to California and a "covered species" under the MSCP. Populations can be found in scattered areas in southern San Diego County's

chaparral habitat and volcanic based soils. From January to March, the Otay Manzanita blooms with white flowers. It is listed as extremely rare by the California Native Plant Society and as a species of concern by the Federal Government. Populations of the Otay Manzanita can be seen on San Miguel Mountain, the Jamul Mountains, and Otay Mountain.

ANNUAL REPORT WORKSHOPS AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

The Department of Planning and Land Use is scheduled to present the MSCP 1999 Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors at their meeting on November 1, 2000. This meeting will be held at the County Administrative Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 310, San Diego, CA, at 9:30 a.m. The Public is welcome to speak at this hearing.

The Public is also invited to the Annual Joint Public Workshop for the MSCP 1999 Annual Report at a presentation and discussion on November 14, 2000. This Joint Workshop is being sponsored by the City and County of San Diego, the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service and the State of California Department of Fish & Game. The presentation will be held at the Visitor Center of the Mission Trails Park located at One Father Junipero Serra Trail,

San Diego, CA. The Presentation at Mission Trails is from 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. The tentative agenda is included below:

6:00 - 6:30: POSTER SESSION

6:30 - 7:30: POWER POINT PRESENTATION

7:30 - 8:00: QUESTIONS

8:00 - 9:00: REFRESHMENTS AND INFORMAL DISCUSSION

For more information please contact Tracy Cline at (858) 495-5513.

Board of Supervisors
Greg Cox, District 1
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MSCP Division Chief
 Robert E. Asher

Contact Information:
 If you would like learn more about the MSCP Program or to become part of the mailing list, please contact Robert Asher:
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